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The Dark Side of Trust: Impacts of User Behaviors and Trust on Perceptions of Security and Privacy

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The Dark Side of Trust: Impacts of User Behaviors and Trust on Perceptions of Security and Privacy

TREO Talk Paper

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Abstract

As of January of 2023, there are over 5 billion internet users worldwide accounting for approximately 64% of the world population (Petrosyan, 2023). Whether it is banking, shopping or working, individual share their personal data across multiple online sites which has implications for the privacy and security of that data. To complicate things further, an individual's trust in online activity may also have an impact on these perceptions. Trust shapes how users behave on a particular website or apply cybersecurity mechanics and use cybersecurity policies online. It has been a crucial factor in various studies within online environments, such as fostering successful relationships, reducing uncertainty and risk, and increasing willingness to purchase. Thus, online behaviors may indirectly impact perceptions of security and privacy by influencing trust online.

Trust, often perceived as a positive factor, can also negatively affect individuals (i.e., the dark side of trust). Pienta, Sun, and Thatcher (2016) proposed these types of trust are often considered harmful for individuals and include both habitual and misplaced trust. Habitual trust is automatic and unconscious trust based on prior positive outcomes with a system, often resulting from repeated satisfactory interaction (Pienta, Sun, and Thatcher, 2016). Misplaced trust is unknowingly extending trust to a malicious technology. This type of trust is common in individuals with low levels of cybersecurity knowledge (Pienta, Sun, Thatcher, 2016). However, little is known about how these types of trusts can be impacted by online behaviors or how they may impact perceptions of security and privacy.

This proposed research aims to examine trust in the online environment and how trust can impact perceptions of security and privacy online. Additionally, individuals' behaviors (hedonic, utilitarian, risk avoidance – all are defined later) will be examined to understand if those types of behavior impact trust. This research aims to answers the following questions:

- Are there factors that influence habitual and misplaced trust, such as an individual's online behaviors?
- Does habitual and misplaced trust impact an individual's perception of their security and privacy online?

References

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Pieta, D., Sun, H., and Thatcher, J. 2016 "Habitual and Misplaced Trust: The Role of the Dark Side of Trust Between Individual Users and Cybersecurity Systems," *ICIS 2016 Proceedings*.